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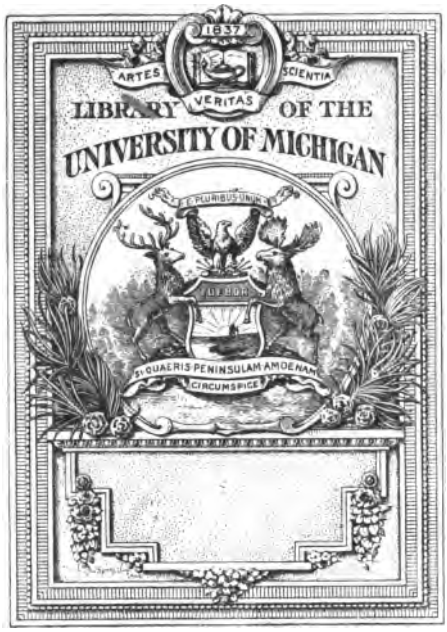
The Training of the Librarian

Ebert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The

Training of the Librarian

By

Friedrich Adolph Ebert

Translated from the second, 1820,
German Edition

The Librarian's Series

Edited by

John Cotton Dana and Henry W. Kent

Number five

Woodstock Vermont
The Elm Tree Press
1916

Mr. Aksel G. S. Josephson brought this book to the attention of the editors and wrote the introduction. Miss Selma Nachman kindly furnished the translation on which it is based. It here appears in English for the first time.

The title page of the original reads as follows:

Die Bildung des Bibliothekars. von Friedrich Adolph Ebert, Doctor der Philosophir und Secretair der Königl. öffentl. Bibliotheken zu Dresden. Zweite umgearbeitete Ausgabe. Leipzig, 1820. bei Steinacker und Wagner.

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FRIEDRICH ADOLPH EBERT

A Librarian of the Old School

Friedrich Adolph Ebert is perhaps best known to American librarians through the English Edition of his "Allgemeines Bibliographisches Lexikon", 1837. In the history of librarianship he occupies an important place as the first who is known to have urged the independence, that is, the adequate payment, of members of the library profession. Many years had to elapse after his death, however, before this principle was accepted in Germany even in theory; in practice it is not even yet completely carried out. Among his papers, in the possession of the Royal library in Dresden, is a critical study of the library of the University of Leipzig, written in 1807, in his eighteenth year, in which he points at the low salaries of the library officials as the cause of the backward condition of that library; and in his first printed work, "Ueber öffentliche Bibliotheken, besonders Deutsche Universitätsbibliotheken", 1811, he declares outright that the only remedy for the unsatisfactory situation in the library world is that librarians be paid enough to enable them to devote their whole time to library service without the necessity of depending on outside work to make their incomes sufficient to support them.

On entering the University of Leipzig, Ebert took

up theological studies, prompted thereto by family traditions — his father had been a minister — but he soon turned to general literary history, gradually broadening his studies to "the history of man's intellectual culture", to quote his biographer, Richard Burger.* The commonplace books which he kept until the close of his life are still used as a tool by the librarians at the Royal Library of Dresden. They cover all subjects and show the man's universal interests. His favorite occupation was to prepare bibliographical reference lists on definite subjects. As a result of this habit Ebert acquired an astounding amount of information on the history and bibliography of learning, and was able to aid workers and students in the most diversified branches of science and literature.

Ebert was born in 1791 in Tappau, near Leipzig, entered in 1808 the University of Leipzig, and obtained his doctor's degree in 1813. The same year he began service in the university library; but before a year was past he moved to Dresden, where he had been appointed secretary at the Royal Library. In 1823 he became chief librarian in Wolfenbüttel, an office once held by Lessing, but remained here only two years, returning in 1825 to a responsible position at the Dresden library, whose chief he ultimately became. His life and services are interestingly told in Bürger's biography, which is one of the two books I would first place in the hands of would-be librarians. The other is Prothero's Life of Henry Bradshaw.

*Friedrich Adolf Ebert, Ein Biographischer Versuch von Richard Burger. Halle: R. Haupt, 1912.

In closing I wish to call attention to one phase of Ebert's work as librarian. He discovered, in 1815, Francke's classification scheme, which was the basis for the arrangement of the books in the Dresden library. This scheme, and the unfinished "Catalogus Bibliothecae Bunavianae", compiled by Francke, which was arranged according to his system, now became Ebert's chief sources in the study of classification, and to would-be librarians he recommended the study of this catalog rather than of books on the theory of classification. After he had mastered the Bünau catalog, Ebert began a comparative study of library catalogs, and from this, this biographer says, he not only learned the best way of preparing a catalog, but also conceived the idea of the catalog as a work of art, as a work which must combine clearness, consistency and minuteness. He was so carried away by this idea that he regarded cataloging as the most important work of a librarian. He himself collected bibliographical notes on the most diverse topics and, in his enthusiasm for cataloging, he even lost interest in any special branch of literature and went to the extreme of regarding books merely as objects for bibliographical descriptions.

AKSEL G. S. JOSEPHSON

Note: The above appeared in Public Libraries, November, 1912

PREFATORY NOTE

These pages appeared first as a jubilee publication in honor of the worthiest of my teachers, and on the day which would have been the day of a like jubilee for my beloved father, had Providence not previously taken him from his family. I wrote in the midst of other work, and the signs of haste, all too apparent, decided me to issue an edition of a few copies only. I could not, however, resist an unexpected inducement to publish a new edition; for I hoped, by this modest effort, to win over a young man here and there to the glorious calling, which I find each day is the very center of the happiness of my life and my work.

For this edition I have again to ask the reader's indulgence, as I have not had the leisure required for revision. However, the book was planned to be merely an outline, not a textbook of bibliothecal science. For that reason all details, and the whole chapter on acquisitions, have been omitted. I have endeavored, avoiding mere theorizing, to give the most essential points of my experience, acquired in two libraries of widely differing character, during the course of seven years. A comprehensive textbook, based upon purely practical principles, is one of my plans for the future. But I would gladly yield the task to someone of more experience, who should come forth as a teacher, if such an one would but present himself.

"Of the making of many books there is no end", lamented King Solomon, the wise, although he lived in an age when bookmarts, stereotypes and the "Industriecomtoir" were all unknown. This saying furnishes a text upon which the librarian, whose work increases and becomes more difficult in the same degree in which the daily output of books grows, might undertake to enlarge.

Men in other learned professions, more honored and respected, may facilitate their task by sweeping into the dust of oblivion all that has become antiquated and obsolete. But it is the duty of the librarian to preserve everything, even what has been abandoned by workers in their several fields of learning, to coördinate and unify opposing forces and to guard and care for all with equal respect and affection. Thus the librarian may (according to the precept of the honest Theophrastus Paracelsus) employ the proverb: "Such as are within the town

wall may have cold or warmth as they desire; those who follow the arts would lack shade were it not for the tree."

While on the one hand all his energies are engaged in one direction, on the other he must observe that he has recently been put in a position altogether different from that which he formerly occupied—a position which can be agreeable to but few. With the changed character of study, with the prevailing inclination for independent research and free creation, with general endeavor to work out independently what aforetime was only collected and, finally, with the creation of a great mass of literary work, he has ceased to be the oracle for young and old which he formerly was. Estranged from active life and prevented from taking part in it, there remains only the archivist to whom he may turn for consolation—a fellow-recluse to whom likewise nobody cares to address himself nowadays for verification of deductions.

It is indeed remarkable that even the latest writers on library science, professional librarians, have had no idea of this change. In our time, with its mania for systemization, when writers do not hesitate to put forward as a scientific principle every idea caught on the wing, library science could not fail to be distinguished by such a principle. They think that they have discovered this principle in

quick finding, as if the art of the librarian consisted merely of systematic arrangement and not also of administration. One could wish that this piece of sapience had been expressed somewhat less pretentiously. This so-called principle, inadequate and one-sided even in the earlier state of library science, is certainly poverty-stricken in our time. The altered scope and character of study has given to our endeavors a much wider field, and to the demands of earlier times are added new and formerly unknown ones which now exact from us all our self-denial.

Nowadays the activity of the librarian belongs largely to posterity, for which he must be a faithful and wise recorder. His intercourse with his contemporaries is for the most part merely mechanical. For posterity, he ought to collect from his own and earlier times what he considers worth while after mature deliberation and unprejudiced examination. And for posterity, he should classify what he has collected, according to principles likely to be permanent. Not a little courage is needed to plant and care for a seed the joyous harvest of which he shall not see.

Yet, it is not to be denied that great self-denial is required to resign the task of creation on one's own account that one may laboriously and unnoticed prepare materials for the future work of others. But

we thereby obtain a higher position, our endeavors gain a more deserving and satisfying direction, our activities a more lasting value.

Librarians in Germany, where the love for rich private collections decreases more and more, will in the same degree, become more and more the connecting link between former ages and posterity. This increases the importance of their duty and their obligation for a more careful training in their calling. Therefore anyone who chooses to devote himself entirely to this profession should first scrutinize himself—honestly and conscientiously—to learn whether he can and will perform what is demanded of him, if not literally by written instructions, certainly by the importance of the office itself and by his own sense of duty.

The librarian's fitness for the special and particular duties of his profession is based, as in any other profession, upon a thorough education. His profession differs from others in that his knowledge should be as comprehensive and diversified as possible. No scholar can neglect a thorough study of Greek and Latin; but the librarian must also master French, English, and Italian. Perhaps in less than half a century an equal knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese will be indispensable. With regard to the other occidental languages he must acquire the ability to satisfy, with the help of a good grammar

and dictionary, at least the demands of the moment. A knowledge of the oriental languages can hardly be expected of him on account of their difficulties and the rare cases in which they are needed; but some knowledge of the easier Hebrew will often be serviceable.

A deep and serious study of history in its higher aspect, as the science of sciences, the basis and rule of all true learning, yes, even of life itself, is indispensable. All the more so as his office is an historical one.

He who desires to work for posterity must, in a certain sense, I say it without arrogance, stand above his contemporaries. He must, while not oblivious to the phenomena of his time, never incline to servile one-sidedness nor obscure his judgment by yielding to tendencies and prejudices which are local and contemporary. This is all the more necessary in a time when nearly all the sciences are at a crisis, which has driven them from their historical paths and has thrown them upon the high waves of opinion and ever-renewing forms of the day.

Literary history and bibliography claim a very great part of the librarian's preparatory studies. These two sciences influence his work to such a degree that he must have more than an ordinary or compendious knowledge of both. The same is true of diplomatics as far as it concerns manuscripts. He

will rarely have occasion to acquire a practical knowledge of this latter science before his actual entrance into his profession, but he must bring with him a good theoretical foundation. Some knowledge of art, at least as far as etching and engraving go, becomes from year to year more necessary for the librarian.

Finally, he may close the circle of his studies with the encyclopedia, not indeed in order to chat vainglorioously about everything from the Cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop creeping along the wall, but to acquire an equal regard for and interest in every department of human knowledge. Without these he would become guilty of the most deplorable one-sidedness in his collecting. Furthermore, he will thereby acquire a sound knowledge of the scope, the character, and the limitation of the different sciences, as well as their relation to one another. Such knowledge he will require hourly in his work of classification.

Of the accomplishments which he must not neglect to practice, it may suffice to mention only memory. If a good memory for titles, names and figures is indispensable to greater facility in his work, it is even more necessary to have a good memory for locations; the librarian who always needs his catalogue in order to find what he seeks is indeed a man to be pitied!

A neat, clear, yet very rapid handwriting is also necessary, and he should not consider some degree of manual dexterity beneath his dignity. The librarian who has learned to help himself will often save troublesome delays in large as well as small libraries. If he is obliged to send for the bookbinder for every loose leaf or for the carpenter when a shelf is in wrong position, he will often find his work unpleasantly interrupted; not to mention other disadvantages to which his ignorance subjects the library, as these artisans will have to work under his supervision and even according to his direction.

What then has he gained by all these acquirements and abilities? Nothing more—and this cannot be often enough repeated—than the possibility of becoming a fairly efficient librarian. These are only the preliminary studies. Just as the lawyer who has had the most thorough education is not necessarily a good practitioner, even though a true jurist, so these studies make nothing more than an able litterateur. With all his literary knowledge the librarian might be unfit for the practical administration of a library. Would that this might be taken to heart more than heretofore! I have never read a biography of a librarian where the statement was not made that in entering upon his position he found the library wholly or partly in disorder. Then follows a relation of all he has done to rectify this

condition, if his ordinary activity permits him to touch upon this point. No doubt a biography of his successor would in most cases begin in the same melancholy strain.

Indeed, these things furnish a great lesson and a serious warning to librarians to begin work purposefully and according to a plan; and they should supply a strong incentive to the youth, who wishes to devote himself to this noble profession, to prepare himself properly for this future administrative work. What is lacking in this particular can rarely be fully made up when in office and never without disadvantage to the library.

This careful preparation for library administration, however, must not commence with the study of text books on library science, such as we have at present. On the contrary, the apprentice must carefully avoid these books, for they are decidedly injurious. There are two dangerous extremes to be avoided: coarse, lifeless mechanicalness (unsystematic, disorderly placing of books, fixed locations on certain shelves, even definite places on one shelf*) and superfine theory (hair-splitting and

* A system formerly used in the South-German Monastic libraries, and (according to Adler) even today in the Imperial Library of Vienna. Each book is given a number or letter for the case, shelf and position on the shelf and remains forever in its place. All later additions are placed in a new case.

impracticable systematizing). The latest German manual* places both these extremes in juxtaposition and tries, though they continue at the same distance apart, to make a connection between them, an attempt fruitless and incongruous, which is very confusing to the inexperienced apprentice.

Therefore the apprentice should for the present avoid all such books and confine himself to the study of technical arrangement of a good catalogue. Francke's Catalogue (of Bunau) and Audiffredi's (of Casana) are especially to be recommended; the former as a model of a classified, the latter as a dictionary catalogue, both of them unsurpassed in their way. Here he can see how titles should be copied † and can acquire that exactness which the librarian must observe, down to the smallest detail, in work of this kind. Here he can find what has to be extracted for each of these purposes and how.

* Mr. M. Schrettinger's textbook contains, in spite of the faulty arrangement of the whole, many good points gleaned from practical experience, and I owe much to its study. I gladly admit that I consider it a book which every librarian needs, and as frankly presume that its author now, after twelve years, has altered his opinion about many questions.

† Francke is a better guide in this than Audiffredi; the latter sometimes takes liberties in making explanatory changes in the titles.

Here, too, he may learn the arrangement necessary for each of these two kinds of catalogue.

He should begin study with Audiffredi and not take up Francke's classified catalogue until he is fully familiar with the demands of a dictionary catalogue and also well informed concerning the principles which govern the entry of anonymous and pseudonymous books. When he has studied these two catalogues carefully enough to be able to deduce the principles upon which they are based, he should compare them with other catalogues in order to get a clear idea of the excellence of these two masters. He may compare Audiffredi first with the Barberini, the Bodleian, or the new Upsala Catalogues.* He will thus find from his own observation which is the better and why.

After he has observed these differences and learned to form an opinion of their value or worthlessness, he may advance to the more difficult task of comparing several classified catalogues or (as there are but few of these) other scientifically arranged catalogues. He should begin with the German ones and study that of Sartori (cat. bibl. Theresianae), J. Burch, Mencke, J. P. von Ludewig, Euchar. Gli. Rinck (interesting from the librarian's point of view); Fr. C. Conradi, Roloff and others,

* I wrote an appreciation of the latter in the Jenaisch. Litt. Zeit. 1817, Ergänzbl. Bd. 2 Num. 71.

comparing them with Francke. The catalogue of E. G. Becker (Dresden, 1773) and the great Dresden Catalogue of duplicates of 1775 should also be considered; the former is entirely and the latter in part the work of Francke's master hand.

After this the student should take in hand the systematic catalogues of other nations, each of which has its own system. The Harleian, the Imperial, Pinelli's, Thott's, and the French ones of De Thou, of the brothers Martin and of the Royal Library of Paris and both parts of Vallière may be particularly mentioned. Here the national characteristics of arrangement should be discovered, compared with the principles followed in Germany, and the student should then attempt to form his own judgment.

From these general catalogues he should advance to those which contain rich collections in certain classes and examine their classification, for instance the Banks Catalogue of Natural History of Dryander or the Medical Catalogue by Platner, 1748, and Baldinger, etc. The literature of the different sciences may be also utilized for this purpose.

Thus prepared he may make his own attempts. He may copy on slips of paper the titles of books on different subjects which appear in all these catalogues. He may then mix up these slips of paper and rearrange them according to his own judgment,

afterwards looking up these books in the different catalogues and seeing how they are arranged there.*

After he has practiced this long enough to be able to place specific subjects or such as belong to more than one class, he should work out clearly his principles of arrangement and endeavor to arrange them in systematic sequence. He must proceed according to the historical method, i. e., he must note what is national or local or contemporary or perhaps merely individual in the arrangement of these German and foreign catalogues (not even excepting that of Francke). He must avoid everything which is subject to change in other times and places, as he is aiming at the acquisition of a permanent, invariable, general rule.

There will always remain national differences in certain divisions of the sciences. The French, for instance, will never give up their class of Sciences et Art. Enough would be gained if German librarians at least could agree upon a generally acceptable system. As the matter stands now each German library has its own arrangement, good or bad, and no librarian can find his way in the library of

* But he must not file according to the literal wording of the titles, putting Wolfe's Museum der Alterthumswissenschaft under Antiques, or Thomae Cantipratensis bonum universale de proprietatibus apum amongst the writers on bees, or even Dormi secure with Dietetics.

another. Such a generally acceptable system can hardly be thought of as long as each library uses a system obtained a priori in purely theoretical fashion.

But might it not be easier to effect a practical understanding? We should remember the present historical character of libraries and honestly accept the fact that they are no longer institutions which are destined to affect directly and immediately the actual life of the day, as, for instance, do schools and universities. They have come to be merely scientific archives for future generations, and it goes without saying that their arrangement should not be ruled by the opinions of the day. It should be such that even with changed systems our descendants can easily find everything and can continue our plan of work.

This can be brought about by observing the following principles: (1) Everything should be based as far as possible upon historical division, because this is so closely related to life that even when antiquated it will be more easily remembered than obsolete, encyclopedic and systematic arrangement. (2) All ideal, artificial and too abstract division must be carefully avoided while the practical and homogeneous should be brought together as closely as possible. This is the difference between philosophical and bibliothecal systematization. In

the former the different parts of the edifice of human knowledge are dismembered and analyzed and the framework lies open. In the latter they appear in close proximity, united and in organic connection and for the general economy of the whole.

This connection with life, its facts and relations, is of the very essence of these institutions, which after all are intended for life and its demands, although it may not be the life of today.

(3) But in this accommodation, and approach to life, one must not condescend too much to temporary or individual views. Formerly librarians (even Francke) could not find a better place for Egyptian hieroglyphics than the chapters on abbreviations of the ancients. Modern librarians are inclined to place them in much higher rank and to give them a degree of importance in strong contrast to the former underestimation.

Again the law student will often look for a book in an altogether different place from that in which the philosopher, historian or philologist will expect to find it. In such cases the librarian must choose an arrangement which comes as near as possible to the point of view of each of these persons.

(4) Too little as well as too much classifying should be avoided. The boundary of a library system is only too easily passed and we destroy our

own edifice as soon as we wander away into the field of philosophical systematizing.

On the other hand we must not be so faint-hearted as to place one book after another on the shelves for miscellanies. How much there is in most libraries in this class which could be placed elsewhere!—for example, in the history of civilization, a class heretofore neglected by nearly all library classifications.

(5) Not the form but the contents should decide the classification. Many librarians place all epistles scrupulously in epistolography, even if they relate only to one specific subject and have nothing else in common with a letter save the beginning and the ending. The form is often so unessential and, regarded as form, of so little value, that most books would be greatly wronged if treated from this point of view. It is better, therefore, not to class special travels by themselves, but rather with geographical, statistical and historical works on each country. There are descriptions of real journeys which are not written in the ordinary diary form of travel. Then there are other books, entitled travels, which contain nothing but continuous descriptions of a country, divided into distinct parts. (An example of the former is Beckmann's Literatur der Reisebeschreibungen I, 114.) Why lose oneself in petty distinctions which lead to nothing and only

make the arrangement, finding, and care of the books more difficult?

(6) With freedom in classification should be united a persistent avoidance of all arbitrary decisions.

No special feature or unimportant fact should prevent us from firmly adhering to our plan, to the end that our work be not rendered wholly or partly useless through a possible future elimination of difficulties or through a new arrangement.

However, this independence of external influences must not degenerate into arbitrariness. The librarian must strictly adhere to what he himself recognizes as law, otherwise there can be no library science. The principle of Denis (Bibliographie I, 259), "A potiori fit denominatio", must be rejected. Every librarian has, like every scholar, a "potius", and what is to become of all these "potioribus"?

After this more general preparation for library work the apprentice should take up a few special subjects and learn from good examples how incunabula, engravings on copper, wood-cuts, or special copies are to be entered and described.

In connection with this study he should practice making these entries. I would recommend for this the use of French or English works only. These must be our teachers in everything concerning practical bibliography. The German books and

catalogs are in this respect so inaccurate that there are many which consider an "exemplaire imprimé sur vélin" or the "Vellum books" of the English as copies on vellum paper!

The student will do well to make himself familiar, in connection with these matters, with the technical bibliographical terms of the French, English and Italians. Thus he will learn, for example, that réclames, richiami and catchwords are our Custoden; that pontuseaux are our Wassermarke or lines impressed in the paper itself; that proof impressions are our Abdrucke; block-books, our xylographische Drücke; black-letter-types, our Gothic Buchstaben; that the registre of the French is neither a table of contents nor an alphabetical index (both of which are by the French called merely "tables") but our Lagenregister (register of signatures) of early printers; that the term "round letters" is sometimes used in contradistinction to the term "gothic letters", and sometimes means simply "round" or so-called "Roman" letters; that it is also used to distinguish the opposite of "Italic" (or cursive) and again to mean our own "Antiqua &c.

The student should also make himself familiar with the Baudini catalogs of manuscripts, which are models of their kind, and form worthy supplements to those of Francke and Audiffredi.

After this he may make more extensive attempts

at designating and arranging his own books or other private collections. He will find that differences in size do not permit the arrangement of the books on the shelves in exactly the order in which they ought to appear in a well laid out, systematic catalog, and he will feel the need of separate order or shelf lists or of special catalogs showing location. He must not be misled into the belief that the order of shelving should be based upon a system altogether different from the one used for the catalog.

The same system may be used for both with slight modifications for books of each size to facilitate the finding of books of the several sizes. It is sufficient to plan for three sizes only. There is no need to separate the octavo books from the smaller ones (especially in the case of French books) which do not differ from them very much in size.

The most serious objection which was made to the systematic arrangement of books (that first condition of the use of the librarian's genuine memory for position) was the difficulty of giving case or shelf marks to books added later. Explicit refutation of particular objections cannot find room here. But the whole subject has lately been so violently debated, and one of the most important divisions of library economy has been so greatly endangered (especially as nothing better has been offered in

place of the so-called "miserable patchwork" than a very clumsy and unsatisfactory mechanical arrangement) that some directions based upon practical experience may be welcome to the beginner.

First of all it is necessary to distinguish between large and small libraries. A small library, poor in funds, which does not make large purchases, does not require frequent insertion of marks, and finds that letters of the alphabet are sufficient. If through a gift a large number of books is added, insertions need not take place, because the catalogs of the divisions enriched by the gift must be rewritten, and perhaps the scheme of the library here and there enlarged, making a renumbering of them unavoidable. In a large and richly endowed library the increase in any one class will not be excessive, and new acquisitions will be widely scattered as the library will already have books on their several subjects.

When at times a certain subject is much discussed (mnemonics, Gall's theory, magnetism, and especially the latest political history,) the librarian need only proceed according to the following rules:

(1) Every single work, no matter in how many volumes, receives only one number.

(2) For insertions, only the small letters of the Roman alphabet should be used. Alphabets of other languages, algebraic and arithmetical fractions,

and especially all arbitrary signs, like * and † found in French and Dutch catalogs, must be strictly avoided.

(3) Unnecessary repetition of inserted letters should be guarded against. There are some librarians who, after they have come to the letter *f* or *g*, begin again with *aa*, *bb*, and prefer to write *aaaa* instead of *z*. Not only does such an arrangement exclude the possibility of inserting new books between those already inserted, but will soon exhaust the supply of marks.

(4) Ordinarily when one inserts a new book between two books already marked with letters, he will, for that book, double, treble, &c., the letter attached to the number of the book that precedes the new one on the shelf. This letter cannot be used more than five times, however, without causing confusion. When a great deal is written upon a subject within a very short time, this method is likely to be insufficient, as only four books can be inserted between 13a and 13b, not to mention the inconvenience of such a repetition. In the library in which I have the good fortune to be stationed I have introduced another notation for insertions which the following example will explain:

Ordinarily, additions are marked thus:

13a, 13aa, 13aaa, 13aaaa, 13aaaaa.
13b, 13bb, 13bbb, 13bbbb, 13bbbbb, etc.

I mark in this way:

13a, 13aa, 13ab, 13ac, etc., up to 13az;
13b, 13ba, 13bb, 13bc, 13bd, etc., to 13bz,
13c, 13ca, 13cb, etc.

Thus I can, without using more than two letters, and in a clear and comprehensible manner, without any danger of confusion, insert between 13a and 13b, 25 books, and between 13 and 14 not less than 625 books, a case which will rarely occur even in the most rapidly growing library. To carry this method still further and use 13ab and 13ac would be useless, as the homogeneous material will already be close enough together.

Attentive reading of writings on libraries and frequent visits to the library of his town are really the keystone of the librarian's preparatory training. He should notice the shelving of books and train his eye to the calculation of the most advantageous use of a given locality. He may now go forth and seek a larger field of activity. Thus prepared, all discerning library authorities will listen to him with attention and every librarian who respects his profession will receive him into true fellowship.

When he has finally found the position he desires he must first of all become fully acquainted with the actual present condition and arrangement of his library and begin to practice the small daily duties of management. This should be followed by

a careful study of the history and former organization of the library. To this end he should study his archives and in the absence thereof he might consider a plan to establish them. He may examine old, disused catalogs and notice their variations from the present ones, as the former often serve as an explanation of the latter.

He should learn to know the handwriting of his predecessors and that of all persons in any way connected with the library (for example, previous owners of acquired collections). From exterior marks, shelf numbers, library marks, handwriting of former owners, certain bindings, or peculiarities of bindings, he can obtain such intimate knowledge of the library in all its departments that he will be able to tell to which acquisition any book belongs.*

Though all these directions may seem pedantic to some, their application is more important than is

* Thus Chardon de la Rochette proves, in his Melanges I, 283, that certain MSS. scholiae to the Anthology, which are in a copy in the Royal Library in Paris, cannot be by Biset, because some have been trimmed off by the binder, and the binding is of the time of Henry II, between 1549-59, when Biset was very young. This shows that the historical data about various bindings in the Royal Library at Paris in the Essai historique sur la bibl. du roi, p. 262 ff. are of very great service. Thus also Engel gave Panzer much trouble with inexact statements in his catalog (compare Deutsche Annal. I, 122, no. 157) and many of his statements found their way into bibliographical works. These errors may only be corrected if the Engel copies in the Dresden Library are recognized. Compare also my Bibliographisches Lexicon under Apuleius, no. 874, Burley, no. 3182.

apparent. Only thus will the librarian obtain true intimacy with his institution and learn to feel at home in it. Only thus can he acquire a true and never-failing memory for location and for a number of details which will equip him all the better for performing his duties and give him that practical sense, which directs all his knowledge and skill, without which no worthy and successful career is possible. Only thus can he learn to be on his guard against that impetuous longing for change and innovation which is certainly more harmful in libraries than anywhere else.

At first, however, he should work under the supervision and guidance of his colleagues, who have been longer in the library, not deviating one step from the customary routine. He must devote special attention to the arrangement of books on shelves of the library; must learn to know the building by frequent and careful measurements, note those book-cases or rooms which are not used to the best advantage, and note those classes which have peculiarities of size. Bibles, Apostolic Fathers, councils and scholastic theology need chiefly folio and few octavo shelves. For belles-lettres, the drama and several of the modern sciences, one folio-shelf as a rule is sufficient; but they need more space for the small sizes. Antiquities, natural history, plastic art and architecture need especially

large folio shelves. In other classes, as for example history, the sizes are fairly evenly divided, and in the editions of the classical writers the early printers made such good use of the folios, the Dutch of the quartos, and the other nations of the smaller sizes, that there will be little difficulty in the shelving. This knowledge will be very useful to the librarian when he changes locations of books.

Experience teaches us how much can be gained by changes in location if carried out indefatigably and with skill. Change of location often opens a gold mine, in cases where space and convenience are lacking. It often would seem impossible that so many more books could be put in the same space, or at least the same number of books shelved so much better, if the fact were not clearly visible.

But in such attempts the librarian must be able to handle the books with a certain skill so that they will not be damaged, and this without losing speed; and he must not shun the labor of changing the books in a case, or even in a whole room, three or more times, until his purpose is finally effected. For two reasons, implied above, it is necessary that he do the main work himself and use the services of his janitors only occasionally.

After he has thus become acquainted with his surroundings in all their relations he may choose for

the subject of his private study the oldest and newest discussions of library practice. A conflict between practice and theory will now begin within him which can have only happy results for him and his sphere of activity. He has now outgrown instruction. He is his own rule and precept and is now qualified to take up the thread and continue independently where his predecessor left off.

But we cannot part with him without directing him to his post with a few good wishes.

The first concerns the planning of his work. This would be very much furthered by his keeping a separate official diary. Whoever has made himself familiar with his library in the way described, will have no difficulty in making a plan for his succeeding labors, in which he can add the details concerning any special point which could be improved. As it is his duty when he enters his office each day to have a clear idea of the labors of the day, so it is none the less his duty to observe at the end of the day, or at least at the end of the week, how far he has advanced in the execution of his plans. Some day this plan and this diary will be valuable treasures for his successors; and the latter, by their aid alone, will be able to continue the work exactly at the point where he left off, and in the same spirit. How many tasks begun with great sacrifices might have been completed, how many

vain endeavors avoided if every library had such a record in its archives!

Furthermore, in making changes either in part or the whole, let the librarian approach the work of earlier times not with complacency and unfavorable prejudices. Let him look carefully for good points and try to eliminate defects without changing the whole. But if a thorough reform is absolutely necessary, he ought to devise a detailed and well-thought-out plan according to which the work shall proceed, one class after the other, so that the departments not immediately affected can remain accessible. A library which has once been put in order ought not to remain inaccessible for a single day, even during the most thoroughgoing reorganization.

The librarian should take especial pains to learn if he has any inventive ability. Happily, while this is in some measure a gift of nature, yet it can in like measure be acquired by thorough application.

Similarities can not be discovered unless one has in mind many things to compare; one cannot remember things unless he has implanted in his mind things to be remembered. These matters depend on one's own exertions. But, to be able to call things to mind when one needs them, to make comparisons quickly with a searching glance which discovers essentials — these are purely the gifts of

beneficent nature, even though they can be developed by practice.

Opportunity for developing these gifts can always be found, no matter how small the number of volumes in the library. Although we may not write a codex rescriptus to enjoy the experience of Knittel or Angelo Mai, we may save from a mass of worthless papers a Berengarius of Lessing; or discover the printer of heretofore undeciphered incunabula; or find important family notices in old Bibles, or in an Eber's calendarium; or take from an old binding parts of old manuscripts or unknown prints.

To take an extreme case, even the most worthless manuscript gives an opportunity for the exact definition of a diplomatic rule; the most wretched book a contribution to Jöcher, or to the history of printing, or to the history of bookbinding.

Indeed, the words "Seek and ye shall find" are especially applicable to the field of library work. The librarian should be an Argus with a hundred eyes and search, sometimes with and sometimes without design, into all departments of his library, taking notes of all that he brings back from these excursions. He will never return without results, no matter how small his library.

The moral qualities of the librarian are outside the limits of a guide like this. I may be permitted

however, to touch upon some of them so far as they influence the administration of the library.

One of the first qualities needed, if not the first, is a strict love of order which embraces the smallest details, and has constantly in mind the possibility of sudden or unexpected death and of temporary or permanent loss of memory. The librarian should not entrust to his memory alone anything which concerns the welfare of his institution. He should take notes of everything and keep them carefully in a place where his successor cannot fail to find them.

Yet, he must not waste time on pedantic details which do not aid essentially in the keeping of order. Such are indices and underlining in some libraries, and filling catalogs with biographical and bibliographical notes which do not belong there.

The same scrupulous care should be bestowed upon the reputation of his institution. Its fame is his own. But this duty is not performed by blowing of trumpets, exaggerated praise, and hyperbolical statements with regard to the number of volumes (a Parisian librarian once very properly answered Hollberg's question in regard to this point: "Pauperis est numerare gregem"). The librarian serves his institution by readiness to please and by being obliging, and by sensible and discreet announcements which will make more useful and accessible

the treasures in his keeping. At the same time he must deal fearlessly with persons who are conceited enough to expect the librarian to sacrifice not only himself but his profession and his library to their wishes. Only too frequently do the heads of large libraries have bitter experiences of the extreme carelessness, the indiscretion, the failure to keep promises, sometimes even the dishonesty of borrowers. It is all the more necessary, therefore, to exact strict observance of the rules of the institution, and, without showing petty anxiety, to exercise watchful caution. The librarian who in this respect becomes guilty of negligence or connivance sins grievously against posterity.

Finally, a not less important, but often non-existent moral quality of the librarian has to be mentioned — self-abnegation and disinterestedness in literary matters. Often positions in libraries are sought after merely for the sake of more liberal and convenient use of their contents. It is time to put a stop to this selfish misuse of position if German librarianship is to hold its own.

No special knowledge of his calling is needed to make it clear that it is not sufficient for the librarian to be on duty only during the hours when the library is open, if he wishes to fulfill the various duties of that calling even fairly well. To the most important part of his work he must give those hours

during which he can count on being alone and undisturbed in his library. This time does not even include that which is required for all the preparation which we have mentioned, or for the correspondence which he must carry on. For this work he will have to choose other hours. There is left for the conscientious librarian barely the time indispensable for the continuation of his various studies. He may not think of literary work if he does not wish to deprive his exhausted body of the few remaining hours for recreation.

His motto must be: aliis inserviendo consumor; not for himself but for others must he work, and willingly must he deny himself the enjoyments which he prepares for others.

To the librarian may also be applied: non fit sed nascitur; for only a special and quite peculiar love for his profession can inspire him to make the sacrifices which he actually does make.

His education must be many-sided and yet thorough. His literary interest must be broad and he must not concentrate his strength upon one field of activity or seize upon one subject with special interest. His activities are of necessity dissipated, yet he must devote himself to his work with diligence and with an exactitude bordering on the microscopic.

Daily he is distracted by dealing with the most

diverse subjects, yet no one more than he needs a clear mind and reliable memory.

Finally, his work, though demanding so much exertion and so many sacrifices, must remain unknown and hidden in the quiet sanctuary of his own library. While the easier and more enjoyable work of others receives loud applause and appreciation, he must find his only recompense in the satisfaction of having done his duty,—a recompense which will often be curtailed, for he will often fail, because of the wide range of his work, to be satisfied with himself. After accomplishing the hardest tasks he finds ever more work before him, demanding ever the same exertion and the same sacrifices.

If after careful deliberation on these duties and a scrupulous self-examination one believes himself capable of the devotion and zeal which the vocation of librarian calls for, he should take up the difficult but glorious work joyfully and courageously. But let those hirelings, who seek only their own advancement and their own pleasure, remain away from every library. Do we not find, wherever we look, egotism enough in these days? Shall the institutions founded by our fathers for general use lose the purpose without which they themselves and all the expense and labor bestowed upon them become wholly superfluous?

Finally, I beg to be permitted to present a few

modest requests to the authorities who conduct the affairs of public libraries. No librarian who respects himself and his profession can be indifferent when he sees how much is left to mere chance in filling positions in libraries.

For the most common and insignificant public offices an examination or other evidence of previous preparation is demanded. In the case of the librarian alone such examinations or credentials have been deemed unnecessary. Indeed, posts have often been given as sinecures or as livings to educators who have failed in their own callings. This is the principal reason why our German libraries have hitherto accomplished so much less than they really ought to have accomplished. In the future let careful examination of applicants remedy this fault and at the same time do honor to the office of librarian.

May the position of the librarian also become more dignified! Nearly everywhere in Germany this position pays a salary insufficient for a care free existence. In order to earn the necessary livelihood the librarian must occupy himself with other work of all sorts. No matter how conscientious he is about his library duties—which have nothing to do with literary work—much of his time and strength must go to such extraneous labor. If he is conscientious and knows his duties well, he will be discontented and his life will be embittered, and he will

appear, perhaps, disobliging to those who do not know the conditions or who are not able to judge impartially.

The requirements of an education for librarianship have been already set forth, and if they have not been exaggerated, it is clear that a mere closet-scholar or platform-teacher cannot meet them. Yet the income of the lowest positions in the schools often exceeds considerably the salary of the librarian.

This unfortunate condition is the more pressing, because the librarian has expenditures unknown to others (for example, expensive correspondence) and he must also have his own well selected library if he would properly conduct his office.

Not less depressing is the uncertainty of the librarian about the fate of his official works after his death; an uncertainty which could easily be removed to the benefit of the library if there existed in each library a supernumerary, with promise of appointment for diligence and ability. If this plan were adopted the librarian would have the pleasure of training his own successor and, without great expense, uniformity of work could thus be insured, as well as the possibility of carrying out plans which demand more than one lifetime.

More attention than has been given heretofore should be devoted to the library rules. Many German libraries have antiquated regulations which

no longer meet the spirit or needs of our time. The librarian, though pledged to observe them, can do so only in part unless he wishes hopelessly to compromise himself and his institution. It frequently happens, therefore, that, without formal abolition of old rules, a practice based upon verbal tradition creeps in—a doubtful guarantee for the preservation of the necessary order.

Where this has occurred the reader is in danger of being dependent upon the whims of the librarian —the rules being unpublished traditions only— while the latter has no protection against the caprices of the reader. It is only right that the librarian should have the leading voice in the drawing up of new regulations, for no one other than himself has complete knowledge of the different cases which arise and the method of handling them. It will then be the business of the authorities to examine his rules, to correct them, and after adding regulations concerning the librarian himself (not without discussing these with him) to authorize them.

Rules must be made to apply to the library itself, its administration and the different persons in its service, as well as to the public which uses the library. The librarian should be unhampered as far as possible and not be restricted in his activities in an undignified way, although the rules should be precise and definite.

It is undoubtedly necessary, for example, even for his own safety and comfort, that there be some control over his expenditure of money. And it is also proper that he ask the approval of the board in the case of large purchases, such as complete collections, which affect appreciably the budget of the year; but he should not be expected to ask permission for every single ordinary purchase; nor should he be restricted in making improvements in the interior arrangement and shelving. But in cases where these involve extra expense or make the library unavailable for a time, it should be his duty to report on them to the authorities.

The rules concerning the use of the institution are a different matter. They must be very definite and as binding for the librarian as for the public. But the advances of the time should be taken into consideration. In many libraries the lending of the most insignificant manuscript is prohibited, while no precautions whatever are taken when lending incunabula, rare editions, or other valuable copies. There are manuscripts, especially in the larger national libraries, which are not for general use, and, in certain cases, are not for present use at all (most of these the eagle-eyed archivist has discovered and placed where they are safe and inaccessible). But why should other kinds of manuscripts, for instance those of classical writers, not